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Elijah Loring.

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# T H O U G H T S

O N T H E

## C H E R U B I M I C A L M Y S T E R Y ;

Or an ATTEMPT to prove,

That the CHERUBIMS were EMBLEMS  
of SALVATION,

By the B L O O D of J E S U S.

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*Whom he hath appointed heir of all things : by whom also  
he made the worlds. Heb. i. 2.*

*He is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

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By J A M E S R E L L Y.

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L O N D O N :

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## T H O U G H T S

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## Cherubimical Mystery, &amp;c.

**T**HE first mention made of cherubims, in the sacred writings, is in *Gen. iii. 24.* when, upon *Adam's* being divested of dominion, and driven out of the garden of *Eden*, for breach of covenant, the cherubims were placed at the end of the garden, to prevent his return thither.

The next mention we have of cherubims, is in *Exod. xxv. 18.* where God commanded *Moses* to make two cherubims of beaten gold, in the ends of the mercy-seat; and so to adjust them, that, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and having their faces turned the one to the other, they might both be looking towards the mercy-seat. *Solomon* is also said to have made cherubims of olive-tree; and, overlaying them with gold, to have placed them in the inner house, even in the sacred oracle: the doors and walls of which house round about, were also ornamented with cherubims carved upon them.

But yet, the description of the cherubims, respecting their figure, is very obscure, until we come to the prophet *Ezekiel's* account of them, who tells us, " They had the likeness of a  
 " man: each of them had four faces; the face  
 " of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right  
 " side, and the face of an ox, on the left side;  
 " they also each of them had the face of an  
 " eagle. They had straight feet, and the sole  
 " of them was like the sole of a calve's foot,  
 " and they sparkled like the colour of burnish-  
 " ed brass. They each of them had four  
 " wings, and under their wings they had the  
 " hands of a man, on their four sides."—

After this manner the prophet describes them; nor is the variation or difference between this and *John's* account of them (*Rev. iv.*) at all material. The apostle, indeed, calls them beasts; so the prophet had called them creatures. The apostle says, they were four, and that they were in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, and that they were full of eyes before and behind. The first beast was like a lion, the second like a calf, and the third had the face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle: and the four had each of them six wings about him: and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day nor night, saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! which was, and is, and is to come.

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From these descriptions, I propose to attempt an explication of the Cherubimical Myltery : by shewing, The origin of the cherubim, and the medium of their appearance.—The reason and spirit of their figure ; and their connection with the wheels, as seen in the prophet's vision ; with a view to a proper evangelical use of the doctrine.

“ And I looked (saith the prophet) and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also, out of the midst thereof came the likenesses of four living creatures, and this was their appearance, they had the likeness of a man, &c.”—In the sides of the north is situated the city of the great king — The title of the great king was given by the ancient *Greeks* to the *Persian* monarch, as the most powerful of their neighbours : and even, before this æra, we find the king of *Assyria* assuming the title of great king. But the *Hebrew* nation, who were instructed not to give flattering titles to men, constantly applied the title of *Great King* to the Lord their God.

The city of the great king, as situated in the sides of the north, is generally applied (I think) to the literal *Jerusalem* ; and the 14th chapter of *Isaiab* is expounded so as to serve this purpose.—The *Lucifer*, son of the morning, there  
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described, as saying in his heart, “ I will  
 “ ascend into heaven ; I will exalt my throne  
 “ above the stars of God ; I will sit also upon  
 “ the mount of the congregation, in the sides  
 “ of the north.”— This *Lucifer* (I say) is  
 commonly supposed to be the king of *Babylon*.

But this hypothesis is liable to more objections than one : it is an error in geography to make *Jerusalem* north of *Babylon* ; the reverse being true. It does not appear to have been the design of the king of *Babylon*, at any time, to fix his throne at *Jerusalem* ; nay, when he led his armies against her, it was rather with a view to divest her of power, to raze her foundations, and to lay her glory in the dust, than to make her the house of his kingdom, or the place his throne should be established.

Hence, the reason and spirit of the 14th of *Isaiab*, must be looked for elsewhere, than in any thing applicable to the literal *Jerusalem*, and to the king of *Babylon*. But, by such who are attached to the letter, and who never go any further in their enquiries after truth, it will be here urged, that the Psalmist intends the literal *Jerusalem* ; where he says, “ Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,  
 “ is Mount *Zion* ; on the sides of the north is  
 “ the city of the great king.”— If this be applied to the *Jerusalem* which is above, who is free with her children, and who is the mother of us all, it is indeed just and glorious. But it  
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may not, with propriety, bear a literal application: for, respecting the *Jerusalem* which was below, and which was ever in bondage with her children, it does not appear that she excelled in the beauty of her situation, nor that she was the joy of the whole earth; nor that she stood in the sides of the north; nor that any prince who ever governed in her was stiled the great king: for where she is at any time, by way of eminence or distinction, called the city of God, the holy city, &c. it is only in a typical sense that she is thus called, as she was a figure of the perfect church, the spiritual *Jerusalem*: for, literally, she hath very different characters in the scriptures. — I come now to propose, that the north, in the sides of which is the city of the great king, and the north from whence the cherubims originated, is rather to be understood allegorically than otherwise; it respects the nature and person of man. — For God being to the whole creation of intelligent beings, both celestial and terrestrial, what the sun, as a figure, is to the latter; those beings may be denominated north, south, &c. just as they, from their dignity of nature, or station, may be situated more or less in the shine of divine favour, and in the enjoyment of the glory of God.

Of those beings, the angels excel in dignity and strength; abound most in power and glory; and dwelling more immediately *in*, and enjoy-  
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ing more abundantly the presence of God, they have *among them*, as the chambers of the south, perpetual warmth, verdure, and fruitfulness.

But man, being originally from nature and station, lower than the angels, and more remote from the views and enjoyments of the brightness and glory of God, is as the colder north, less warm, less fruitful, less verdant: and yet, such is the will of the Almighty, such the riches of our Creator's love towards us, that he hath made choice of the sides of the barren north for his habitation; there to raise the mount of the congregation, there to build the city of the great King! and this he effected, by taking on him not the nature of angels, but the seed of *Abraham*.

Man, from his first creation, being considered as the north, it is not unnatural to suppose, that the whirlwind, which the prophet saw coming from thence, intended man's fall and rebellion against God, which was sudden and rapid as the whirlwind. Whirlwinds are often said to come out of the south, which the scriptures represent as according to nature: but, except in the prophet's vision of the cherubim, I remember not to have read of a whirlwind coming out of the north. Hence, the account is ushered in with a note of attention and wonder; BEHOLD, a whirlwind came out of the NORTH! &c. This is, at least, an intimation that it related to something extremely rare and

and singular, the repetition of which was not to be expected. Nor is there any thing so fully pointed out by such a figure, as is the great transgression, which man having once committed, hath it not in his power to commit again.

The great cloud may intend that dark and clouded state wherein the human soul was involved upon its departure from God, and which rendered all the prospects and expectations of man unspeakably gloomy and dreadful.

The fire infolding itself, denotes guilt, the natural fruit of iniquity, and which the scriptures compare to fire; whilst the brightness round about, may imply conviction; consisting of remembrance, reflection, and consciousness, and aptly considered as a brightness distinct from the fire.

The colour of amber shining out of the midst of the fire, is not without its significancy. The origin of amber hath been controverted, whilst, respecting its qualities, as more demonstrable, there is a general agreement.

That amber is originally liquid, may, as I think, be gathered from its containing flies and other insects, which, upon its being broken, may be discerned in its most solid parts. That which is gathered from the sea, may probably be consolidated, partly by the salts, and partly by the fermentation and friction of the waves: hence it is emblematical of punishment for sin,

which receives its force from the tumultuous distresses of the guilty mind. The wicked are compared to the troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest.

Amber, is an inflammable substance, and greatly bituminous, and is in this a figure of the punishment due to sin, which, in the scriptures, is represented under the similitude of fire, burning pitch, and brimstone.

Amber, is also of note for its electrical powers, another figure of the punishment of sin, which punishment being just and equitable, draws into its vortex, for chastisement and annihilation, every evil work, word, and thought.

The natural colour of amber is a pale yellow; and the prophet seeing this colour in the midst of the fire, it denoted that guilt hath its punishment in itself, and yet each distinguishable from the other.

Upon the above hypothesis I raise this proposition, The whirlwind coming out of the north, with the cloud of fire, &c. were emblematical of the fall, with all its dreadful consequences; conviction, guilt, gloom, horror, despair, death and hell, as the punishment thereof.

Out of the midst of this appearance the prophet saw the likeness of four living creatures come forth, "and this was their appearance, they had the likeness of a man."—The cherubims had, indeed, their origin from  
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the Father of Lights: but the medium of their manifestation, and the only given reason of their utility, was from the fall of man, unto which they owe their appearance, usefulness, and indeed the apparent reason of their existence; God having purposed in himself to glorify the riches of his grace by those means.—We read nothing of the cherubims until after *Adam's* transgression: for, though they existed with God before (unto whom were known all his works from the foundation of the world) yet the reason and time of their appearance were not come until sin entered; but then they were immediately appointed to guard the way of the tree of life.

As I expect it will not be controverted, that the cherubims or living creatures, which the prophet saw, are the same with those which *John* beheld in his vision, mentioned before, I shall, first, consider the description according to the latter, and that, as I judge, will throw some light upon the former.

*John* says, “ That the first was like a lion,  
 “ the second like a calf, the third had a face  
 “ as a man, and the fourth was like a flying  
 “ eagle: each had six wings, and were full  
 “ of eyes: and they rest not day nor night  
 “ from saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God  
 “ Almighty! which was, and is, and is to  
 “ come.”



This I would explain as follows—The number four intends the four principal particulars of redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ—The face of a man denotes Christ's incarnation, or the Word made flesh—The face of the calf, ox, or heifer, was significant of his sacrifice—The lion, ever victorious, is prince of the forest, and, at his roar, the whole nation of beasts tremble: this likeness is manifestly the symbol of power, and implies our Lord's resurrection, when he gave proof of his having trodden down strength, of his having subdued and destroyed sin, and hell, and death, with him who had the power of death, even the devil. The resurrection of Jesus had power to unbind, justify and discharge from all sin, the helpless sons of men: yea, at his resurrection, he had all power in heaven and in earth given into his hand, and therefore fitly represented by the lion.

The eagle, from the strength of its pinion, soaring above the reach of human eye, and from its piercing sight, has always been considered hieroglyphical of the sublime, the exalted, and the glorious, and therefore beautifully points out our blessed Lord's ascension.—Thus these four faces, in their mystic design, bear witness to the great salvation.

Their being full of eyes before and behind, shews the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ  
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looking backward to *Adam*, and forward to his offspring, even to the end of time.

Their wings intend the divine attributes; mercy, truth, righteousness, peace, wisdom and love; upon the consent and harmony of which the Redeemer and his Redemption ascend above all heavens.

*Ezekiel* saw but four wings to the cherubim, because the rich display of divine wisdom and love, in the redemption of mankind, was reserved for the New Testament state, the heights and depths of which were manifested to the apostles, and hence it was that *John* saw six wings.

The prophet discovered under the wings of the cherubim the hands of a man, which implies that authority and qualification derived to the Saviour from the harmony of the divine attributes in his great and finished salvation.—From whence, as the reward of his toils, he merited and was qualified to receive gifts for men, even the rebellious, that the Lord their God might dwell among them.—From hence, also, he has obtained that all power in heaven and in earth should be put into his hands.

It is said of those which *John* saw, that they were full of eyes within, which denotes inward light and conscious purity. As all human righteousnesses are compared to sepulchres, which, though they be beautified and whitened without, are within full of rottenness, filth,  
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and darkness, so in contradistinction to the righteousness of man.—The righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ is represented, in the beauties of holiness, as full of eyes within: for, when he undertook the cause of man, and yet to vindicate the ways of God with him, he drew not his bow at a venture, but pursued his plan in sure and certain hope, conscious of the equity and righteousness of his proceedings and success; every face of his salvation was full of eyes within, light, life, health and purity.

It is also said of those which *John* saw, that they rest not day nor night, but incessantly cry, holy, holy, holy, &c.—This shews, that the redemption of mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ (that glorious work and labour of love!) is the source of everlasting praise unto God and to the Lamb.—All his works praise him, but peculiarly that work of wisdom and love where he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to works of righteousness as wrought by us, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Jesus Christ, before the world began. From this grace the Almighty receives the most spiritual and continual praise.—This blessed grace can ascribe unto the Father of Lights, not only wisdom, mercy, and love, but holiness, and that in perfect harmony, and consistent with his  
infinite



infinite perfections : hence the perpetual cry of holy, holy, holy.

It was upon this glory given to God, and not before, that the four-and-twenty elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever, and ever, casting their crowns before his throne, saying, “ Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory  
“ and honour and power ; for thou hast crea-  
“ ted all things, and for thy pleasure they are  
“ and were created.”

From the above we are taught, That the elders have their matter, spirit, and right of praise, from the great redemption.—When the faces of salvation, in truth and justice, ascribe holiness to God, and rejoice in his purity thereby, preaching the everlasting gospel, and giving proof to man of the harmony of the divine properties in Jesus Christ, by whom all things consist, then it is that all those who rejoice in that salvation, shout forth the praises of the Lord, and beings taught to know him, who was from the beginning, they learn the end and design of their creation.

From the remarks which I have already made, I trust it will be seen that *John's* description of the beasts, is exactly coincident with *Ezekiel's* description of the cherubim ; both containing, in my judgment, the same mystery, without any material difference in the description.

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I have already hinted, that though the faces of salvation were ever before the divine presence, God having from everlasting appointed us to salvation by Jesus Christ, yet it was by means of the fall of man that the divine decree, respecting this matter, was revealed to him.—Though the grace and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, comprehended in the Cherubimical Mystery, was the eternal delight of the Most High, and what he had as the first and principal in view when he made the worlds.—Yet, until the fall, neither the excellence nor necessity of this grace appeared.

Thus we may consider the cherubims coming out of the whirlwind, the cloud, the fire, &c. to be the revelation of Christ, respecting the method and glory of his salvation, manifesting itself by means of the fall: then mankind had the first specimen of God's wonderful working, where, out of the eater, he brought meat, and out of the strong, sweetness; and, without controversy, taught us that all things work together for our good.

The cherubims, as symbols of salvation by Jesus Christ, were placed at the east end of the garden of *Eden*, accompanied by a flaming sword which turned every way to defend the way of the tree of life: but of this I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

All things, man in particular, being made for Jesus Christ, designed as an inheritance for  
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a beloved son, subjects for a prince, a flock for the shepherd, and a bride for the bridegroom, they were destined to a state of eternal dependence on him. Man being originally formed for the glory of Christ, his first creation state, respecting righteousness and holiness, was simply figurative. Hence the apostle tells us, that *Adam* was a figure of him that was to come.

*Adam*, while he lived in the figure only, knew not the intent of his existence, nor that there was before him a greater good than he yet enjoyed. Naturally supposing that his innocence entitled him to the favour of God, he must necessarily conclude, that his continuance in the state of innocence would secure to him that favour. This idea originated in *Adam* from the entrance of the law, notwithstanding it entered for other purposes; and though it was immediately superseded by the gospel, in the promise of the woman's seed, to bruise the serpent's head, yet the taint remains, the prejudice is conspicuous in his offspring, who generally say, that if *Adam* had observed the precept, he and his posterity would have been saved by his obedience: and that *Adam*, being a free agent, instead of transgressing as he did, might have continued in his righteousness, and thereby secured eternal life to himself and to his offspring.

But this, in my judgment, is such an egregious mistake, as betrays an absolute ignorance

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of the scriptures, and of the power of God.—The apostle says, “ If there had been a law  
 “ given which could have given life, verily  
 “ righteousness should have been by the law,”  
*Gal.* iii. 21.—Hence I argue, the insufficiency  
 of the law given to *Adam*, to give him life,  
 was because it had no such appointment: it  
 was not given him for that end, as appears  
 from *Rom.* v. 20. “ Moreover, the law entered  
 “ that the offence might abound.”—From hence  
 it may be inferred, that *Adam*’s obedience, had  
 he persisted in it, would not have intitled him  
 to eternal life: forasmuch as the salvation of  
 Jesus was not an incidental affair, dependant on  
 contingencies, but a matter fixed in the fore-  
 knowledge, and by the determinate counsel of  
 God, who had not appointed us, unto wrath,  
 but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ:  
 nor was it possible that any effort of the crea-  
 ture should frustrate this decree of the Creator;  
 therefore he could at no time obtain salvation  
 by the works of his own hands.

Human wisdom hath feigned, and tradition  
 keeps it in countenance, that God promised sal-  
 vation to *Adam* on condition of his obedience:  
 but this is not the doctrine of the scriptures;  
 nay, from these the contrary is manifest, as ap-  
 pears from observations already made.

Nor does it follow, because *Adam* was threat-  
 ened with death on the day he eat of the for-  
 bidden fruit, that he was to inherit eternal life

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on condition of his abstinence: this being, at best, but negative holiness; and, with the nature of things, inconsistently entitled to reward. Moreover, the apostle assures us, that the promise was not through the law.

As to the pretence that *Adam* had a freedom of will, and that the choice of good or evil was in his power; I reply, the power, or even the possibility of choosing evil, is incompatible with a perfect state. Hence I infer, that *Adam*, as a perfect man, could have no disposition to choose the evil.

If it depended on the creature's choice whether he would be saved by his own righteousness or not, then was it in the creature's power to confirm or disannul the decrees of his Creator; than which to imagine, there can be nothing (in my judgment) more absurd and impious.

To suppose the same person having an equal freedom of choice towards good and evil, is an absurdity much more glaring than that of a hermaphrodite in the human kind. It is a creature in equilibrio, between good and evil, and yet not so, because he chose the evil rather than the good: these and many more are the inconsistencies deducible from the notion of free-agency in man.

I am aware of what will be deemed a full answer to this, *i. e.* "The balance in man had  
" not inclined to evil but for the interposition



“ of an enemy.”—To which I answer, a fort, described as above, could not be taken but from a traitor within, or from the will of the prince to dismantle and give it up.—I am confirmed in this from a saying of our Saviour’s: “ For  
 “ the prince of this world cometh, and hath  
 “ nothing in me.”—Jesus being a perfect man, had not the evil seed in him, and therefore when tempted was not overcome.—*Adam*, originally, had not the evil seed in him, and therefore could not have been overcome by temptation: nor can the subtilty nor force of the enemy effect any thing against perfection.

The cause, therefore, of the lapse must be sought for elsewhere, and the Psalmist explains it as follows: “ Thou turnest man to destruction.”—As the husbandman turns his vineyard to destruction, by neglecting its fences and culture; so that, instead of the vine and the fig-tree, thorns and thistles over-run it; and the wild boar of the wood having access, uproots every pleasant plant.

The apostle says, “ The creature was made  
 “ subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope,”  
*Rom. viii. 20.* That *Adam* was the creature here intended, will not (as I suppose) be questioned: and in that he was MADE subject to vanity, it implies that he did not subject himself to it.—He was *made* subject not willingly—This must intend either the will of him who  
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made the creature subject, or the will of the creature himself; but the first cannot be intended, whether the power who subjected the creature be supposed to be gracious or malignant.

I am aware of the common received opinion, that it was satan who subjected the creature to vanity; but, surely, it cannot be said of him that he acted unwillingly in the affair.—Nor can it be said of the Almighty, where he is supposed to have subjected the creature to vanity, that he did it unwillingly, as it would imply him under a necessity of acting contrary to his will: it must therefore intend the will of the *creature himself*.—From thence I infer, that the will of the *creature* was not concerned in his subjection, nor was it the consequence of his choice, for that would necessarily imply that the creature had, from creation, an evil bias, which consists not with the purity of the Creator.

But the creature was made subject to vanity by reason of him who subjected the same in hope; *i. e.* as I humbly conceive, by reason of Jesus Christ, who being originally appointed heir of ALL things, ALL things, MAN in particular, being made for him, these were the appointed means by which he was to gain possession of his own.—As the figure must necessarily give place to the substance, it was requisite that the creature should be subjected to vanity,

nity, that the purpose and grace given him in Christ Jesus, before the world began, might take that place unto which it was appointed.

If the Saviour is the person by reason of whom the creature was subjected to vanity, the inference is easy respecting that will and power which subjected him, though done by the agency of him, who acting as an enemy, nor sought nor expected ought less than the ruin of the creature. That the serpent, or satan, did it, is what the scriptures affirm, but the will of God limits the power of satan, and the wisdom of God over-rules all his devices; so that satan's doing it, is no denial of his doing it by the determinate will of God, and by reason of Christ. The subtilty and enmity of the serpent to God and Man being made, in this particular, to subserve the purpose of grace. Thus Christ appointing, over-ruling, and conducting, may be considered as the power, by reason of whom, and by whom, the creature was subjected to vanity in hope, though effected by the agency of another.—I am aware that sundry affect to make wide distinctions between appointment and permission, and, as they relate to man, such distinctions may be just; but, surely, when applied to the Divine Being, they are unwarrantable, yea absolutely wrong.

Man, defective in knowledge, fore-knowledge, in wisdom and power, may permit what he does not appoint; yea, what may be contrary



trary to his choice, because (by him) not to be prevented.

But such distinctions are by no means applicable to him who is in himself the fulness of all perfection. However men philosophize, or play the sophist, it is impossible, to common sense, to separate necessity from fore-knowledge. God foreknew that *Adam* would fall; but it was impossible for infinite wisdom to be mistaken, *Adam* must fall, nor was it in himself to prevent it. All power is of God; therefore whatsoever is to the fore-knowledge of God, is so in consequence of his own appointment. Fore-knowledge may be considered as the consciousness which the Divine Being has of his decrees, they being infallible, not to be frustrated nor altered, and therefore, with all their fruits and consequences ever before him, irreversible and unavoidable. Nor doth he permit but what tends to fulfil his decrees. Hence, all affectations to distinguish between the decree and the permission, in God, have more subtilty than simplicity, as expedients contrived by the wisdom of this world to exculpate the Almighty from the charge of acting inconsistent to the rules which human prudence dictates to him. But common sense says, what God permits he foreknew, and what he foreknew he had decreed.

I have observed, that Christ was the person by reason of whom, or on whose account, the  
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creature was made subject to vanity ; and that notwithstanding it was done by satan, yet he being made to serve the glory of Christ in that particular, and employed to fulfil the decree, the text represents the person, by reason of whom it was done, as the doer of it himself, and says, “ *That he did it in hope.*”

In *hope* of blessing them with a new and better creation.—Thus He, who sat upon the throne, said, He, would make all things new, notwithstanding his having, at the first, pronounced them very good.—A manifest indication, that the original state of man was not planned for eternity ; was not built for continuance, but to serve the purpose of God’s love to his Son, and to mankind, as comprehended in him.

He subjected the creature to vanity, in hope of attaining that glory and honour that had been decreed him, as the Saviour of men : the way to which was through his death on the cross. But the humiliation of Jesus hath its propriety from a previous subjection of the creature to vanity, which sense (among others) is admitted in our Lord’s own words : “ *Ought not Christ to have suffered those things ?*”—And again, “ *Thus it behoved him to suffer.*”—Here the subjection of the creature to vanity is manifestly pre-supposed, and rendered as a reason of his sufferings and death ; yea, and of an obligation that he was under thus to suffer  
and

and die, that he might enter into his glory. This being the hope in which he subjected the creature to vanity, and which hope he perfectly obtained.

Where there is no law there is no transgression.—Without law, man originally could not have sinned: the law therefore entered that the offence might abound. Undoubtedly the first entrance of the law, in substance, was in God's ordinance to *Adam*: “Thou shalt not eat of it; in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”—The design of which was not to prevent his fall, nor was it intended as a ministration of life to him, on condition of his obedience, but it entered that the offence might abound; abound to every work, word and thought of every man; abound with judgment and condemnation, to the total reduction of the creature, until every *seeming* avenue of salvation, by man's own obedience, should be shut up from him, and from his posterity for ever.

When lust had conceived, it brought forth sin; the prohibition contained in the law operating on creature curiosity, produced inclination, and stimulated to desire; from the conjunction of the prohibition with this desire (the latter of which is increased by the plainness and positiveness of the former) the offence proceeded, abounding to *Adam* and to all his offspring.

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But, lest it should be objected, that this doctrine makes God to act from sovereignty, to the irreparable loss of his creatures, let it be understood, that where sin abounded, grace much more abounded; so that the glory of God, and the eternal welfare of mankind, have been much more promoted by man's death in *Adam*, and his life in Christ, than they could possibly have been by his continuance in the state wherein he was created.

This revolution being ordained and appointed to serve the decree of salvation, by the blood of Jesus, is not to be respected as a matter of accident, a meer fruit of the human will; nor as the produce of satan's power, cunning, and enmity; but that it was effected by the will of God, a death by him appointed to be the gate of life.

Man being originally formed for the glory of Christ, and to be an inhabitant in his kingdom, it was not intended that he should continue in this world, because the kingdom of Christ is not of this world.—It is a fond mistake to suppose that *Adam*, on condition of his obedience, might have lived for ever in this world; nor is there the least shadow of such an implication contained in those words; *i. e.* “In the day  
“that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely  
“die.”—Since, as *Adam* lived several hundred years after that transaction, it is manifest that  
natural

natural death, or that of the body, was not intended in the threatning.

It is indeed said, that in the midst of the garden, wherein the man was placed, there grew a tree which had life-giving virtues, and of which, if the man had eaten, he might have lived for ever: but this tree, it seems, was not thought of by *Adam* before his fall; and, no sooner was he fallen, than he was driven out from the garden, and his return prevented by the awful cherubim and flaming sword, which turned every way to defend the way of the tree of life, lest the man, putting forth his hand, should take and eat and live for ever.

This is a mystery, the explication of which I conceive to be as follows: the tree of life was Jesus Christ: but *Adam*, before his lapse, being righteous and holy in himself, could have no sense of the free grace of his God, nor of his everlasting salvation in Jesus: conveniency and necessity of these were not yet known to him, therefore he had no desire to eat. But when none other prospect, than that of the shadow of death, remained to his view, when fallen a prey to the furies, guilt and despair, it was revealed to him, that the woman's seed was to be his salvation: then was he disposed to put forth his hand to take and eat of the tree of life, and to live for ever, as implied in the sacred text.



Yet, as the terms used in the promise are literally ambiguous, and rather seemingly import destruction to the serpent, than deliverance to man, *Adam* might be naturally enough induced to imagine, that though salvation was intended him, through the woman's seed, or the Lord's Messiah, it might be conditional, and required the putting forth of the hand, in repentance, contrition, new obedience, &c. in order to his being benefited thereby; and, by these means, attempt to re-enter paradise there, by putting forth his hand to take and eat of the tree of life, and live for ever.

When *Moses* is read, the text says, "Lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever."—But, when *Jesus* is read, the text says, "Who-soever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."—And again, "He that eateth me, shall live by me."—Thus, *Jesus* is the tree of life which grows in the midst of the paradise of God.

When God drove *Adam* out of *Eden*, it was not with the design that he should never, on any account, eat of the tree of life, or of *Christ*, but to prevent in him every shadow of title to eat thereof, from human merit.—"LEST HE PUT FORTH HIS HAND AND TAKE," said God; which putting forth of the hand, as it implies a creature act, so it with the utmost metaphorical power made use of to distinguish human

human righteousness; for thus we read in the prophet: " If thou take away from the midst of thee, the yoke, and the putting out of the finger."—Lest *Adam*, by human efforts, or works of righteousness done by himself, should attempt to eat of the tree of life, or, on the authority of such preliminaries, presume to depend on God's Messiah for eternal felicity. —I say, to prevent his aspiring to happiness by these means, God drove out the man from *Eden*, and not only thence, but out from himself, also from every pleasing hope of salvation, suggested by means of self-sufficiency. And, to keep him under this conviction, to deter him from attempting an entrance by these means, God placed before him the cherubim, with the flaming sword, which turned every way to defend the way of the tree of life.

The revelation of God, or the holy scriptures, are compared to a sword, a two-edged sword; quick, sharp, and powerful, piercing even to the soul and spirit; and here to a flaming sword, turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life.—The word which God had spoken to *Adam*, containing a promise of salvation to mankind by the woman's seed, was (in my judgment) the flaming sword, intended in the text. This revelation, or word of promise, being engaged for the glory of Christ, as the alone Saviour, and to prove and defend his salvation as free, and without works of  
 righ-

righteousness as done by us, stands here connected with the faces of salvation, and waves as a flaming sword, aweing man from the putting forth of his hand, or from approaching to eat and live thereby ; *i. e.* from attempting to attain unto the righteousness of God, by the establishment of his own righteousness.

However awful and terrible the cherubim and flaming sword might be to *Adam's* flesh, they were yet the gospel of God to his spirit, and designed to instruct him in the method of grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.—They taught him, that, by means of Christ's incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection and ascension, he might eat of the tree of life, and live for ever, there being none other means of re-entering paradise, or of his approaching the tree of life left him but by the cherubim.—Nor was it possible for him to come in by them, while he retained the thought of availing himself by the putting forth of the hand, or by any virtue, work, or device of his own ; because of that flaming sword, which is ever attendant on the cherubim ; that revelation or word of God, which maintains that there is none other name, named in heaven or on earth, than the name of Jesus, that contains salvation.

Man, like a thief or a robber, is always lurking and prying to get in some other way than by the cherubim, to plunder the tree of life, to eat and live : but the word of the Lord,

or



or the flaming sword, still prevents him, by turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life.—The word of God stands armed to oppose every other way to the tree of life than the cherubimical way, and resolutely and infallibly resists every human attempt to enter, eat and live, by other means than the cherubim.

We read no more of the cherubim until God commanded *Moses* to form their likenesses, as follows: “Thou shalt make a mercy-seat of  
 “ pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be  
 “ the length thereof, and a cubit and a half  
 “ the breadth thereof: and thou make two  
 “ cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt  
 “ thou make them; in the two ends of the  
 “ mercy-seat; one cherub on the one end,  
 “ and the other cherub on the other end, even  
 “ of the mercy-seat: and the cherubims shall  
 “ stretch forth their wings on high, covering  
 “ the mercy-seat with their wings: and their  
 “ faces shall look one towards another, toward  
 “ the mercy-seat shall the faces of the che-  
 “ rubim be, and thou shalt put the mercy-  
 “ seat above upon the ark, and in the ark  
 “ thou shalt put the testimony which I shall  
 “ give thee.”

That the gospel of salvation, by and *in* Jesus Christ, was taught in all these things, admits of no controversy.—First, the ark itself was a figure of Christ, is manifest from its use, being  
 a chest,

a chest, coffer, or vessel, either to keep in secrecy, or to preserve from loss and ruin, such valuables as were endearing to the Preserver.—Such was the ark formed for the preservation of the seeds of the creation in *Noah* and his family, and of the creatures who were with him.—Such was the ark, though made of bulrushes, or flags, in which *Moses* himself was preserved from the destruction unto which the *Hebrew* male children were doomed by an *Egyptian* tyrant.—Such was the ark which the same *Moses* made according to the pattern shewn him in the Mount, and which was ordained to contain and preserve the tables of the law, *Aaron's* rod, and the pot of manna.

The mystery of the rod took its rise from hence: The princes of the congregation, to the number of two hundred and fifty, stirred up by *Korah* and his associates, gathered themselves together against *Moses* and *Aaron*; their pretence was, that the brothers took too much authority and sanctity upon them, seeing that the congregation were all holy, and the Lord among them.—Thus tacitly accusing them of lifting themselves up, from carnal motives, above the congregation of the Lord, they appeared determined to abridge their power.—But this disposition of theirs brought wrath from the Lord upon them; the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up *Korah* and his company quick into the pit; and, among the others, a fire  
from

from the Lord brake forth, which quickly consumed them. — This occasioned another and more universal murmuring among the people, which was chastised by a plague, whereof died fourteen thousand and seven hundred ; and, but for the interposition of the atonement, they had been all dead men.

To heal those murmurings, and to prevent, for the future, the heavy chastisements which had hitherto followed them, the Lord commanded that the chief of each tribe should take a rod, and that *Moses* should write each person's name upon his rod, and *Aaron's* name upon the rod of *Levi* ; and that those rods should be laid up before the Lord in the Tabernacle of Witness ; declaring, that the man whom he would choose from among them, to minister in holy things before him, and to govern the congregation, HE (the Lord) would cause his rod to blossom, that the people by that token (knowing the Lord's choice) might have no colourable excuse for their murmuring.

“ And it came to pass, that, on the morrow,  
 “ *Moses* went into the Tabernacle of Witness,  
 “ and behold the rod of *Aaron*, for the house  
 “ of *Levi*, was budded, and brought forth  
 “ buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded  
 “ almonds.”—And the Lord commanded that  
*Aaron's* rod should be kept for a testimony  
 against the rebels ; and that *Moses*, by this rod,  
 should quite take away their murmuring from

before the Lord.—The rod accordingly was put into the ark.

But there was more intended by this rod than that it should be a sign of whom the Lord had chosen to govern his church; it was designed to take away their murmuring; not by a literal prevention of it through some physical change, for this it did not effect, as appears from their manifold murmurings after this transaction.

The rod, in scripture language, denotes chastisement: the princes of the congregation were figures of the people, but *Aaron* was a figure of Christ.—The trial by rods was a revelation of the mystery of the divine will respecting his choice of a chastisement for sin, relative both to the object and method.

In brief, *Aaron's* rod was an emblem of Christ's sustaining the chastisement of our peace. The prophet says, "The chastisements of our  
" peace were laid upon him."—And in the Psalms we read concerning him: "If his  
" children forsake my laws, &c. I will visit  
" their offences with a rod, &c. nevertheless,  
" my loving kindness I will not utterly take  
" from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."  
—And so far was the Captain of our Salvation from repining at the rod, or the visitation of our offences upon himself, that the deliverance of mankind was the joy that was set before him, when he endured the cross, and despised the  
shame.—

shame.—Again, he says, “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”—And again, “He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head.”—All which implies, that it was not contrary to his choice that the judge of *Israel* was smitten on the cheek with a rod.

The blooming, blossoming, and fruit of *Aaron's* rod, intends the happy consequences resulting from the sufferings and death of Jesus.—The sorrows and sufferings of Jesus teem with light, life, and immortality to the sons of men.—These, cloathed upon with the garment of salvation, are the fruit of his perfect obedience and bloody toil.—This was the rod which put away the murmurings of the people from before God, by expiating the guilt, and blotting out the remembrance thereof for ever.—Hence, the figure of this grace and love in *Aaron's* rod, as a sacred depositum, was placed in the ark of the covenant, in the tabernacle of witness.

The manna also, as typical of Jesus, the bread of life, was preserved in the ark.—When the *Israelites* were fed with manna, in the wilderness, if they kept it over night it stank, became corrupt, and bred worms (the sabbath excepted): but, when a pot of this manna was put into the ark, it was preserved in purity for many generations.—This was designed to teach them, that their spiritual food, and that eternal



life which God had given them, was treasured up in the Messiah, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge were hidden, and that it was not in themselves.—Hence, they were not to lay up grounds of comfort and consolation against the morrow, but to have their purity, peace and joy in the Messiah, and therefore always to be found looking unto him as the author and finisher of our faith; while, laying aside every weight, they run the race set before them with patience.

The tables of the testimony were also deposited in the ark, by express command from the Most High: “And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee,” *Exod. xxv. 15*.—And again; “Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee,” *Deut. xxxi. 26*.

A witness! of what? Not on their side, for it was against them: it testified against all their righteousnesses that they were but filthy rags, and that they were altogether incapable of keeping the law contained in the tables: even *Moses* himself, the meekest of the sons of men, had such ungodlike passions, that the tables were not safe in his hands: they could only (in perfection and safety) be kept in Christ, of whom the ark was designed a figure.—In the pierced side of Jesus were the tables to be depo-

deposited; there was the law to be magnified and made honourable; there to be kept as a witness against all the righteousnesses of man.

This is further exemplified in the burial of *Moses*: we are told that God himself buried him in a valley overagainst *Beth-peor*; which implies the house of the gaping or opening, or the orifice in the side of Jesus; for certainly here it is that *Moses* lies buried.

*Moses*, and the body of *Moses*, as terms sometimes used in the scriptures, are to be understood figuratively, as representing the law given by him.—Thus in the definition which we have in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, of the servant and son: “*Moses* as the servant, faithful  
“ in the house of God, who, notwithstanding,  
“ was not to continue in the house for ever,” certainly intends the law given by him which was to give place to the gospel, to that grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

Again; the apostle saith, “*Moses* hath in  
“ every city them that preach him.”—And again, when *Moses* is read, “The veil is on  
“ their hearts.”—These all intend the law which is called *Moses*, from its being his ministry; so, by the body of *Moses*, we are to understand the whole of the law in its fulness of reason and spirit.—This body was buried in the valley of the Lamb’s humiliation, having in prospect the blood and water from his pierced side, and is spiritually the burial of the body of  
*Moses*



*Moses* in the valley overagainst *Beth-peor*, or the house of gaping, or the opening.—God himself buried him; nor on the day that the account was written did any man know of his sepulchre.—But in these latter days, God speaking to us by his Son, has shewn us that the body of *Moses* (respecting the precepts, requisites, and curses of the law) was buried in the obedience, sorrows, and sufferings of Jesus; and therefore the believer in Jesus now knows of the sepulchre of *Moses*.

We also read in *Jude* of *Michael*, the archangel, disputing with the devil about the body of *Moses*, which I understand thus: satan, whose enmity and rage are ever pointed against the free salvation of man, by Jesus Christ, challenged *Michael* to shew him the sepulchre of *Moses*: he contended that a free salvation was inconsistent with the law, or body of *Moses*, arguing, that that body was not yet dead and buried, as no man knew of his sepulchre; *i. e.* that the law had not its full and final accomplishment in the obedience, sorrows, and sufferings of Jesus, and therefore was neither magnified nor made honourable by that salvation, so that the body of *Moses* had not a just and honourable burial.—Such was, is, and will be the language of an enemy to the ways of God with man.

But, to return from such unnecessary digressions, as they may probably be thought by some  
who

who may read them, and to draw nearer to the subject proposed.—Taking it for granted that the ark, with its contents, were figurative of Christ, his person, purity, passion, and salvation, we have to observe, that the mercy-seat was placed over the ark, to signify that mercy is built upon Christ, and on his fulfilling all righteousness.

From the mercy-seat being made of pure gold, many useful hints might be given, such as of the purity, extension, durableness, &c. of divine mercy; but I would, if possible, avoid being prolix in the extreme.—The cherubim being beaten out of one piece of gold with the the mercy-seat, denotes that the cherubim, or the faces of salvation, originated from love and mercy, as properties in the divine nature.—The cherubim having their faces directed to the mercy-seat, exhibits a reason wherefore mercy should be administered thence, wherefore God should in faithfulness and justice forgive man his sins, and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

F I N I S.



















